

Nashville District

Human Resources Newsletter

"News You Can Use"

Issue 15-01-03

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The purpose of this newsletter is to keep Nashville District employees informed about personnel issues, concerns, and topics. You are encouraged to review the information and disseminate to your organization. If there are particular areas of interest that you would like to see addressed in future issues, an article of general interest, or general comments, please contact John Restey at 615-736-5538 or John.G.Restey@lrm02.usace.army.mil.

General News:

A New Central Resume Processing Center

Beginning 12 May 2003, our new Central Resume Processing Center will begin processing resumes you submit by email, hard copy or other means for vacant jobs in the Europe, Northeast, North Central, South Central, Southwest, and Pacific regions. If you are applying for jobs in the Korea or West regions, you must continue to submit your application directly to that region by going to their homepage via Civilian Personnel On Line (CPOL) and sending your resume following the instructions on their individual sites.

The new central resume processing center will also be the central point for answering any questions you may have regarding the submission of your resume or the use of any of the Army automated programs such as the resume builder, the Applicant Notification System Web Enabled Response (ANSWER), or Self-Nomination for Army jobs. At this time, the Center will support all Army regions except Korea and West Regions.

[We prefer that you use our resume builder to create and submit your resume electronically. The Army Resume Builder is located at \[https://cpol.army.mil/rb/rb_entry.cgi\]\(https://cpol.army.mil/rb/rb_entry.cgi\). However, if you do not desire to use the Army Resume Builder, you may submit your resume to the center using surface mail, email or other means. Please follow the instructions in our job application kit to create your resume and assure that all of](#)

the required information is provided. The new Job Application Kit is located at <http://cpol.army.mil/employ/jobkit>.

Please be aware that you do not need to submit a new resume if you already had one in the Centralized Resume Database prior to 12 May 2003.

DoD Favors Pay Banding for All Its GS Employees

Defense Department officials in announcing details of the civilian personnel reform plan recently sent to Congress, have indicated that they favor going to a pay banding system for all of the agency's general schedule employees, in effect eliminating the traditional GS grade and step system for its roughly 470,000 current GS employees. Instead, the proposal seeks to build on pay banding models tested at the agency in recent years by creating five "career groups": science and engineering research; professional and administrative management; engineering, scientific and medical support; business and administrative support; and college cooperative education program. Since the latter category effectively includes only a small number of college students, the vast majority of employees would be in one of the other four. The scientific and engineering research professional category would have three pay bands, while the others would have four, with managers having greater leeway in setting employee salaries than under the current system, taking into account factors including demand for skills at that level in the local marketplace. The tops of each pay band would rise with the general federal pay raise each year. For the initial period, at least, DoD is not proposing pay banding for its roughly 150,000 blue-collar employees under the wage grade system. In addition to the pay bands in the career groups, the DoD proposal includes authority for a pay differential for those with supervisory duties of at least 10 percent. There also would be discretion to give higher pay to a supervisor who has a subordinate earning more than the supervisor. The differential would count toward retirement benefits but it would not continue if an employee receiving it left to take a position without such duties. In addition, pay for managers would be tied at least in part to organizational performance. TAKEN FROM FEDWEEK

Performance Pay Could Replace Annual Raises

DoD officials also have said that under their proposed pay-for-performance system, high-performing employees would get greater rewards than under the current system. The proposal would pay all GS employees the locality component of the annual raise—typically around 1 percent in recent years—while the funds for the across-the-board component, plus the amount currently spent on within-grade increases, which are largely based on longevity only, would go into the performance pay pool. Employees would be rated annually in seven areas: technical competence/problem solving;

cooperation/teamwork; communication; customer care; resource management; Leadership/supervision; and contribution to mission accomplishment. Individual managers would determine how much weight each of those factors should be given in a particular job. Employees would be evaluated on a 100-point scale, with only employees rated at least a 50 getting any annual increase other than locality pay. Employees rated in the top 10 percent would be rewarded the most heavily, although exact percentage breakdowns are to be determined. Recommended employee increases would be brought before a performance review board. TAKEN FROM FEDWEEK.COM

Retention, Advancement Systems Also to Be Revised

Under the DoD proposal the performance evaluations also would be given greater weight in deciding who stays or goes during a reduction in force than under current policy. Longevity, as determined by an individual's "service computation date" would be used only last, as a tie-breaker. Also, the traditional processes of promotion and transfer also would be effectively abolished and replaced with an emphasis on "job changes" that are either competitive or non-competitive. In general, only those changes that would offer the employee an opportunity for a higher salary immediately would be competitive. TAKEN FROM FEDWEEK.COM

Interview skills

When done properly, job interviews can save the government money, according to a new report Merit Systems Protection Board study called: "The Federal Selection Interview: Unrealized Potential <<http://www.mspb.gov/studies/interview.htm>>." According to the MSPB report, hiring the wrong candidate can cost the government as much as \$300,000 in wasted salary, benefits, severance pay, training costs-and time. The board found that while the majority of federal managers emphasize the interview when making hiring decisions, few agencies invest in the tools needed to glean the most-and best-information about a job candidate during the interview process. "A lot of people sort of use the unstructured approach because in the short term they see it as easy: It doesn't require much advance planning, no investment and not much time, but it doesn't work very well," an MSPB official said Tuesday. "It doesn't give you anything relevant back to the job requirements itself; it will let you get other people just like yourself, which isn't necessarily bad, but it's not necessarily good either." Because these casual or unstructured interviews are "less valid than structured interviews, are subject to bias, and may expose employers to complaints and challenges," **MSPB recommended that federal managers use structured interviews.** "The structured interview is based on kind of an analysis of the job itself and what criteria are important in the job," the MSPB official said. "Take the criteria and develop some questions and let candidates show you what they have to offer. The best predictor of a person's future behavior is her past behavior, in context." TAKEN FROM GOVEXEC.COM By Tanya N. Ballard

Tennessee Professional Privilege Tax Exemption

The link below takes you to where you get the IRS form to claim tax exemption from the Tennessee Professional Privilege Tax. Although this site is maintained by the Tennessee Bar Association, open the WORD document under Federal Employees and it will explain the exempt professions including engineers. Apparently you must file the exemption form to not have to pay the tax. Please pass this on to others that this might benefit.

privilege tax form

<http://www.tba.org/news/exempt.html>

New OPM Scholarship Program:

Parents may be interested in advising their aspiring college students of this new OPM program, "Scholarship For Service," that offers college funding in return for a period of employment by the student after graduation. The program is funded through grants awarded by the National Science Foundation. The program has been designed to increase and strengthen the cadre of federal information assurance professionals to better protect the government's critical information infrastructure. It provides scholarships that fully fund the typical costs that students pay for books, tuition, and room and board while attending an approved institution of higher learning. Additionally, participants receive stipends of up to \$8,000 for undergraduates and \$12,000 for graduate students. While still in school, students funded for more than a year will also serve a paid internship at a federal agency. The agency may offer students other paid employment while they are on scholarship if it does not interfere with their studies. Information on the SFS program is available at www.sfs.opm.gov <<http://www.sfs.opm.gov>> <<[>>](http://www.sfs.opm.gov)>.

Health And Benefits:

New Federal FSA Program for Employees

<http://www.opm.gov/insure/pretax/fsa/index.asp>

Food For Thought:

**"Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint on it you can."
Danny Kaye**